File 148

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S PEOPLE (N) PLANNER (N) SYSTEM
        1627402   PEOPLE
          34382   PLANNER
        2004477   SYSTEM
     S1        3  PEOPLE (N) PLANNER (N) SYSTEM
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T S1/9/ALL

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DIALOG(R)File 148:Gale Group Trade & Industry DB
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08287797   SUPPLIER NUMBER: 17731042   (THIS IS THE FULL TEXT)
 **The Sports Authority Announces Major Initiative to Increase Customer
 Service and Improve Inventory Productivity; Retailer Rolls Out
 People-Planner Labor Management System to Schedule Employees to Customer
 Traffic.**
Business Wire, p11271061
Nov 27, 1995
LANGUAGE: English   RECORD TYPE: Fulltext
WORD COUNT: 682   LINE COUNT: 00066

TEXT:
     FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 27, 1995--The Sports
Authority (NYSE:TSA), the nation's largest full-line sporting goods
retailer, adopts a high technology solution to the age-old challenge of
providing excellent customer service.
     As part of its "TSA 2000" initiative, the 130-store chain has begun a
chainwide roll-out of the People-Planner=AE labor management= software,
developed by Information Marketing Businesses, Inc. (IMB), to forecast
customer shopping patterns and then schedule the appropriate staff
throughout the store.
     Based on results from the pilot program, The Sports Authority expects
that People-Planner will enhance service levels by matching staffing to
traffic flow and item movement. Under-and over-staffing situations will be
reduced by precise allocation of the right number and skill of personnel to
the sales floor, cash registers, receiving area and back office at all
times. During the pilot test period, People-Planner streamlined the
scheduling process by matching employees' skill levels (i.e. cashier,
fishing expert) with customer traffic and/or item movement, allowing store
managers to spend more time on the sales floor. In addition, store managers
credited the software with helping them to make more effective hiring
decisions through a better match of store needs and a prospective
associates's skills and availability.
     "We feel our customer service differentiates us from our competitors,"
stated Jack Smith, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and President. "And
this software should only enhance our position. With People-Planner, we can
better project how many customers will be in the store and how many items
will be sold during each period the store is open, department by
department, to ensure we have the best coverage on hand."
     "We reviewed several labor management packages but felt that IMB's
program had the flexibility to keep up with our stores," says Arnie Sedel,
Senior Vice President of Operations. "People-Planner is not just a front
end labor system; it forecasts for the whole store, down to the customer
and item level. Our footwear department, for example, requires more time
per customer than does the team sports department. During our test period,
People-Planner forecasted the number of customers per department so we
could put our resources where they were needed."
     The pilot program began with one store in November 1994 and was
expanded to eight stores during the subsequent eight months. The Sports
Authority has now installed the program in an additional 60 stores and
anticipates that the remaining stores will be rolled out in spring of 1996.
     "The Sports Authority is committed to installing People-Planner in all
of their major markets in time for the important holiday selling season,"
says Barbara Rodes, account manager for IMB. "They have put together a
dedicated team of regional trainers to go out to the stores and train the

managers. In less than one month, approximately half of The Sports
Authority stores began using an automated labor management system. From the
beginning, this effort has been supported by a strong commitment and much
enthusiasm from senior management through to the store level."

The Sports Authority is running the People Planner Dynamic Scheduler
and Forecaster modules on personal computers at the store level. Point of
sale information is downloaded to the People-Planner program, which then
forecasts sales, items and customers by department in 30-minute increments
for each day. The system then produces an optimal schedule based on
forecasted labor needs and employee skills and availability. Store managers
can make adjustments to the schedule as necessary. The system replaces the
previous process of scheduling employees manually, which took eight to ten
hours per week, per store.

The People-Planner system is developed by Information Marketing
Businesses, a privately-held company located in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Since 1982, the company has developed labor management systems exclusively
for the retail industry. Its products include People-Planner Forecaster,
Dynamic Scheduler and Time & Attendance modules, all of which run on a
myriad of hardware platforms. There are over 14,000 retail sites worldwide
running People-Planner products, including Army Airforce Exchange Services
(AAFES), Burlington Coat Factory, Kmart, Publix, Shaw's Supermarkets,
Target, TJ Maxx and Woolworths Australia.

The Sports Authority operates 130 megastores in 26 states across the
United States and Canada. The company has opened 23 stores in 1995 and
expects to open 6 additional stores prior to the holiday selling season.
        CONTACT: Alex Stanton
        Director of Investor Relations
        305-677-6003
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COMPANY NAMES: Sports Authority Inc.--Services
INDUSTRY CODES/NAMES: BUS   Business, General
DESCRIPTORS: Sporting goods industry--Services
PRODUCT/INDUSTRY NAMES: 3949000 (Sporting & Athletic Goods)
SIC CODES: 3949 Sporting and athletic goods, not elsewhere classified
TICKER SYMBOLS: TSA
FILE SEGMENT: NW File 649

1/9/2
DIALOG(R)File 148:Gale Group Trade & Industry DB
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07484417   SUPPLIER NUMBER: 16090440   (THIS IS THE FULL TEXT)
Raley's finds resistance to automated schedules.
O'Leary, Chris
Supermarket News, v44, n27, p11(2)
July 4, 1994
ISSN: 0039-5803   LANGUAGE: ENGLISH   RECORD TYPE: FULLTEXT; ABSTRACT
WORD COUNT: 999   LINE COUNT: 00075

ABSTRACT: Raley's has experienced opposition from store managers to the
implementation of its automated labor scheduling software system according
to a senior executive speaking at the Retail Systems '94 Conference.
Raley's Store Systems Coordinator Robert Lyon says that it has been
difficult to convince some store managers to use the system since many
store managers want to continue to exercise personal control over the
scheduling of employees. One-quarter of managers were not using the system,
but an additional round of manager training convinced holdouts of the
efficacy of the program.

TEXT:

WASHINGTON -- No matter how good the program, technology is only half the battle in implementing automated labor scheduling.

The other half is convincing and training store managers to use the automated system, a task that can be immensely challenging and time-consuming, said Robert Lyon, store systems coordinator at Raley's, West Sacramento, Calif.

"Store managers want to control everything in their environment. For many of them, instead of relinquishing something as personal as scheduling to a computer program, they would rather spend the time doing it themselves," Lyon said at the Retail Systems '94 conference here last month.

Raley's introduction of a laborscheduling software system last year, he said, ran into a serious obstacle at the store manager level.

The system, People Planner, from Information Marketing Business, Cambridge, Mass., uses point-of-sale scan data and customer counts to create a weekly work schedule. Raley's launched it last August with a four-month training blitzkrieg for managers at 64 stores.

After the training, Raley's conducted a survey indicating 60% of the managers felt scheduling had improved as a result of using the new system.

"But then I began hearing rumors" managers were not using the system, Lyon said. "I started calling around trying to find more evidence of this, and as near as we could tell, probably 25% of the managers were not using the programs for one reason or another."

Because store managers were required to send computer-generated schedules to the executive offices every week, many of them were continuing to make the schedule manually and keying it into the computer, he said.

"That concerned us, not only that people weren't using it, but that it was very difficult to identify" which managers weren't using the system, Lyon said.

As a result, Raley's had store managers undergo another round of training this April. The training sessions helped some managers increase their knowledge of the program. More importantly, it enabled the chain to pinpoint which managers were not using it.

"We had a trainer come in and spend a day working with them," Lyon said. "He was able to find out pretty quickly whether [the managers] were using the schedule and whether or not the personnel records were up to date."

Lyon said about 10% of store managers are still "struggling" with the system. But he is optimistic they will eventually accept the concept that a computerized program can create a more efficient schedule.

"I asked one manager why he didn't use the program, and he said he had a particular vision of what his schedule should look like, and that's not what he got from using it -- so the program was wrong," Lyon said. "It's difficult to [tell] someone like that, 'Maybe your original concept was incorrect, maybe you weren't meeting your needs the way you thought you were.'"

After considering the obstacles Raley's has encountered in implementing the system, Lyon feels the introduction could have been handled better.

"I've been told you need a commitment from the main office before you roll out a program, but I think it's best if you start from the store level," Lyon said. In particular, the survey should have been conducted at the beginning of the process.

"It would have been easier to identify who the tough nuts to crack are out there. I think we would have gotten a much more candid response at that point than after the company has already rolled out a million-dollar program. [Managers] are shy about standing up in front of their bosses and saying, 'You guys messed up.'

"The person has to operate this program and believe in this program," Lyon said. "We liken accepting automated labor scheduling to jumping out of an airplane and having faith your parachute will open. Some of those people we were able to convince the chute would open. Others I think we're probably still struggling to convince."

When it implemented the system, Raley's had hoped to reduce labor costs while maintaining an adequate staff to serve customers, Lyon said.

"Our service levels had been dropping, and we were getting a little more concerned about labor costs and bottom line. One of the mandates we had initially was to reduce labor percentages while increasing sales. We were trying to give them a tool that would help them increase their service level without increasing labor."

The program was also designed to help relieve some duties of the store managers. Using Raley's previous system, a spreadsheet program that recorded hourly sales for two days during two consecutive weeks, some managers would spend almost two days working on weekly front-end schedules, Lyon said.

"The manager had to sit down and forecast what he was going to do in sales for each day of the week, and then the system would tell him how many people he would need for each hour. That's not as effective as we'd like a manager to be. If he's spending two days writing a schedule, who's running the store?"

The new system uses the number of items rung up by cashiers and hourly customer counts as the means of measuring how many workers are needed at a certain time, Lyon said.

"Sales in themselves do not create work," Lyon said "The number of items a cashier has to check out and the number of customers a cashier has to deal with are the things that create work, not sales."

Lyon said Raley's has had increased sales since the program was started, though he cautioned that the increase may be partly from an upswing in the California economy. "It's hard to say whether that increase has come from better customer service or a better economic climate," he said.

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COMPANY NAMES: Raley's Inc.--Information services
INDUSTRY CODES/NAMES: FOOD   Food, Beverages and Nutrition; RETL
    Retailing
PRODUCT/INDUSTRY NAMES: 5411110 (Supermarket Chains)
SIC CODES: 5411 Grocery stores
FILE SEGMENT: TI File 148

1/9/3
DIALOG(R)File 148:Gale Group Trade & Industry DB
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05918118   SUPPLIER NUMBER: 12152345   (THIS IS THE FULL TEXT)
 **Keeping an eye on labor: computer software that oversees your store
 employees can help you contain labor costs and increase customer service
 - nice benefits during a recession. (supermarkets; includes list of labor
 automation vendors)**
Garry, Michael
Progressive Grocer, v71, n4, p63(3)
April, 1992
ISSN: 0033-0787   LANGUAGE: ENGLISH   RECORD TYPE: FULLTEXT; ABSTRACT
WORD COUNT: 1686   LINE COUNT: 00133

ABSTRACT: Grocers are using time attendance and labor scheduling computer
software in greater numbers, in an effort to cut costs and counter the

recession. Time and attendance systems, which monitor employee hours, are highly touted for their ability to preempt tardiness and employee sloth. Labor scheduling systems, which use payroll statistics to determine payroll requirements, are used less frequently because many retailers do not yet possess point-of-sale interface capacity.

TEXT:

Time and attendance and labor scheduling systems--computer software that helps store managers schedule and control their labor pool--have become more popular in recent years for some very good reasons.

The sluggish economy, of course, has forced retailers to become more conservative about costs of all kinds, and these systems can cut labor costs. Add to that the booming expense of health-care benefits, which has forced retailers to look for new ways to trim labor costs.

Supermarkets are turning to technology for answers. Jerry Morton, president of store systems Consulting & Marketing, Lawrence, Kan., predicts that by the end of this year, time and attendance systems will be installed in "at least 10,000 stores," of which between 25% and 35% will also have labor scheduling software.

In essence, time and attendance systems electronically monitor and summarize employees' hours, while labor scheduling software analyzes sales history to come up with a sales forecast and labor schedule. Both work at the store level. Both generate reports that help managers track their employees.

Although it would seem that labor scheduling should come first, in most cases chains and wholesalers have been investing in time and attendance first, and then labor scheduling. "You want to be careful and do it in stages," Morton says, adding that having a time and attendance system makes implementation of labor scheduling software easier. Together, the two systems automate the entire labor process, except for the production of payroll checks, which is done separately at the store, at chain or wholesaler headquarters, or by third parties.

Schwegmann Giant Super Markets, New Orleans, is equipped with time and attendance software (from BASS Inc., Dayton, Ohio), with no immediate plans to take on labor scheduling. One problem common to Schwegmann and others not doing labor scheduling: the absence of an electronic link between the frontend point-of-sale system and the PC or minicomputer that would run the labor scheduling software.

But Schwegmann is benefiting from its time and attendance system. According to Buddy Pedeaux, retail systems analyst, the system costs $11,825 per store to implement, divided among software, hardware (time clocks purchased from NCR, Dayton, Ohio) and electrical wiring. That multiplied by 16 stores in the chain gives a total cost of $189,200.

On the other hand, Pedeaux estimates an annual savings of $178,102, based on the elimination of "time theft" (long lunches, tardiness, early departure, which are identified in a report), time cards, and the salaries of two key punchers and four payroll clerks. It now takes no more than a day to run the payroll, as opposed to two to three days under the old system.

The system comes with a package for printing bar-coded badges, but Pedeaux reformatted the badges in his own way. Since then, he says, BASS has made the package "more flexible."

Unlike Pedeaux, Gary Rhyne, vice president of retail systems for Scrivner, the Oklahoma City-based wholesaler, doesn't agree that a time and attendance system can save an exceptional amount of clerical labor. "You're adding employees to maintain the PCs and handle a lot of activities you wouldn't normally do," he says. Scrivner, like other wholesalers, acts as the middleman between vendors and independents, and also installs the systems and provides training and help-desk support.

But Rhyne does think his People Planner system (from IMB Inc.,

Cambridge, Mass.) gives managers better control over employees, especially
in stores with large staffs. This control comes in the form of reports that
in effect give time and attendance systems some labor scheduling
capabilities. Overtime reports, for example, can tell managers how close
they are to paying overtime wages. Another audit report might point out the
need to cut back hours to meet a department's budget.

The IMB time and attendance software, like other systems, allows
managers to input the complex guidelines of a labor contract or other
company rules that they would otherwise have to commit to memory. And it
maintains a database of employee information such as date of last salary
increase. (List price: $1,500 per module for DOS systems; $2,000 each for
UNIX.)

Morton warns that stores that install automated time and attendance
systems must be willing to train employees on the new aspects of checking
in and out. Some time clock, for example, allow employees to key in a job
assignment number when moving from department to department; this helps in
budgeting for each department. And some clocks are programmed not to pay
overtime to employees who punch in more than six minutes before starting
time or six minutes after quitting time.

Though not as prevalent as time and attendance systems, labor
scheduling software has been catching on lately. "When times are tight,
there's always an interest in this," says a spokeman for a co-op. "I
installed two today."

The co-op's labor scheduling program, called SuperSked (from Software
Marketing Inc., West Orange, N.J.), has borne fruit. In one six-month test
of front-end and courtesy booth employees, it improved a store's sales per
man-hour from $330 to $387. In another nine-week test at the front end,
front-end payroll, as a percentage of total store payroll, decreased by
almost a percentage point; this savings alone paid for the software, priced
at $1,995 for single units. Normally, the payback period is between three
and 11 months, depending on how efficient the store's labor scheduling had
been.

According to the spokesman, the SuperSked software reduces payroll
not only by calculating total labor hours, but by pinpointing when
employees are really needed. It might suggest that, based on projected
sales, a checker only needs to come in at 9:30 a.m. on Monday instead of
the standard 9 a.m. "When you make up the schedule manually, the tendency
is to repeat the previous week's schedule," he says. "But if you've
scheduled people at the front end who aren't really needed, they're usually
not spending the time packing out or doing something productive."

The software also factors in employee productivity, availability,
seniority and wage level, and tracks who should be allowed to work the
express lanes or the courtesy booth. It takes into account that one checker
will be assisted by a bagger, while another will not. In addition, it
maintains an employee database and interfaces with a time and attendance
system made by Kronos, Waltham, Mass.

Dominick's Finer Foods, Northlake, Ill., which has used the Infotronx
labor scheduling software in a few stores for about six months, is in the
process of rolling it out to all 100 stores in the chain. The software is
based on a sophisticated "stochastic" probability modeling technique used
by NASA. Dominick's was the first user of the Infotronx time and attendance
system, having had it installed for seven years.

Gary Esch, vice president of methods and productivity for Dominick's,
prefers not to comment on any labor savings the software may have produced.
But he says it has resulted in improved customer service, reflected in
shorter lines at the front end. "We're seeing a better match of front-end
labor to customer traffic patterns," says Esch.

The Infotronx software makes sales forecasts using the previous seven
years' daily sales data, by department, and the previous four weeks'
customer traffic data, including the number of items and customers and the

size of each order, by the quarter hour. From the sales forecast, it devises the current week's labor schedule.

The sales data reflects the impact of holidays and paydays, while the traffic patterns show changes that take place in the near term--from the closing of a competing store, for example. Esch calls the forecasts "very reasonable." The software also generates update reports that tell managers how they're doing compared to the forecasts.

"We tried to do this before manually, but we wouldn't make as many changes as frequently as we do now," says Esch. "Before we updated schedules every four to eight weeks; now it's every week."

Carr Gottstein Foods, Anchorage, Alaska, will be rolling out labor scheduling software from CompuSked, Fort Lee, N.J., to all of its 13 stores later this year after installing new store controllers. In a pilot test started last year, the software increased the productivity of the assistant manager responsible for labor scheduling.

In addition, the software "showed us a little fat that we hadn't trimmed from our schedule," says Jim Dunlap, retail systems manager. Actually, CompuSked's schedules were too lean. "We want to focus more on service--have a bagger with every checker," says Dunlap. "So we've come up with schedules that are between theirs and our old schedule."

The CompuSked program, which runs on an NCR Tower computer, projects sales for a one-week period based on the previous year's sales data. Its cost starts at $1,000, and goes up depending on the store's computer configuration, says CompuSked. At Carr Gottstein, the program has been altered to incorporate another software program, which determines how long various grocery tasks take to do.

Labor scheduling vendors are usually willing to correct glitches in the programs that crop up. Following a change from PCs to minicomputers, for example, Dunlap found that after a screen was cleared, portions of it would remain; but CompuSked corrected the problem, he says.

Most labor scheduling systems require significant training time for store and department managers. "The biggest problem has been the training time resulting from typical supermarket turnover," says the co-op spokesman. "Running the system is not like being a checker; you need to be somewhat PC literate and it helps to have typing skills." Adds Dominick's Esch, "We want managers to understand why it schedules the way it does."

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INDUSTRY CODES/NAMES: FOOD   Food, Beverages and Nutrition; RETL
    Retailing
DESCRIPTORS: Supermarkets--Data processing; Personnel management--
 Computer programs
SIC CODES: 5411 Grocery stores; 7372 Prepackaged software
FILE SEGMENT: TI File 148
?

F: 15

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S PEOPLE (N) PLANNER (N) SYSTEM
          574137   PEOPLE
           17680   PLANNER
          636982   SYSTEM
     S1         2   PEOPLE (N) PLANNER (N) SYSTEM
?
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T S1/3,K/ALL

   1/3,K/1
DIALOG(R)File 15:ABI/Inform(R)
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00796612 94-46004
 Scheduling that works
Hennessy, Terry
Progressive Grocer v72n12 (Part 3) PP: 35-36 Dec 1993
ISSN: 0033-0787 JRNL CODE: PGR
WORD COUNT: 1287

...TEXT: to write," says Bob Cooley, a Raley's store manager. Raley's uses
IMB's People Planner system . At H.E.B., Krueger says managers are
saving four to six hours a week...

   1/3,K/2
DIALOG(R)File 15:ABI/Inform(R)
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00607701 92-22804
 Keeping an Eye on Labor
Garry, Michael
Progressive Grocer v71n4 (Part 1) PP: 63-66 Apr 1992
ISSN: 0033-0787 JRNL CODE: PGR
WORD COUNT: 1587

...ABSTRACT: labor scheduling software analyzes sales history to create a
sales forecast and labor schedule. The People Planner system from
IMB Inc. gives managers better control over employees. It allows managers
to imput the...
...TEXT: installs the systems and provides training and help-desk support.

But Rhyne does think his People Planner system (from IMB Inc.,
Cambridge, Mass.) gives managers better control over employees, especially
in stores with...
?

T 00796612/FULL

00796612/9
DIALOG(R)File 15:ABI/Inform(R)
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00796612 94-46004
Scheduling that works
Hennessy, Terry
Progressive Grocer v72n12 (Part 3) PP: 35-36 Dec 1993 ISSN: 0033-0787
JRNL CODE: PGR
DOC TYPE: Journal article LANGUAGE: English   LENGTH: 2 Pages
WORD COUNT: 1287
COMPANY NAMES:
H E Butt Grocery Co (DUNS:00-792-4756)
Kroger Co (DUNS:00-699-9528 TICKER:KR)
GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: US

DESCRIPTORS: Retailing industry; Trends; Grocery stores; Chain stores;
    Human resource management; Workforce planning; Electronic; Scheduling;
    Software; Advantages
CLASSIFICATION CODES: 8390 (CN=Retailing industry); 6100 (CN=Human resource
    planning); 5240 (CN=Software & systems); 9190 (CN=United States)

ABSTRACT: Electronic labor scheduling has been available since the early
1980s, but it has only been embraced by large numbers of grocery retailers
in recent years. Most grocers say that the systems provide more efficient
use of the existing work force. Electronic labor scheduling systems enable
managers to provide customer service while meeting the complex requirements
of a modern work force. Tim Krueger, manager of productivity development
at H.E.B., says that electronic labor scheduling enables H.E.B. to better
meet customers' needs by putting employees where the demand is. H.E.B.
uses TimeCorp.'s MinuteMan system. Kroger saw an 11.53% increase in
customers served per hour and a savings of $20,593 per week with the
software program SMILE (Store Management Information & Laborsaving
Environment) by Total Control Information. At D&W, electronic labor
scheduling has made it easier to schedule minors within complex child labor
laws. A listing of vendors of labor scheduling software is included.

TEXT: The sophisticated software for scheduling front-end employees is
getting downright personal--and profitable.

That's the consensus from several store executives and managers, each using
software from different vendors.

Electronic labor scheduling has been available since the early 1980s, but
has taken the industry by storm in the past few years. In 1992, for
example, 21% of chains said they were purchasing labor scheduling software,
according to Progressive Grocer's 1993 Annual Report of the Grocery
Industry.

Most grocers say the reason for the interest in these programs is simple:
The systems provide more efficient use of the existing work force. In a
world of paper-thin margins and ferocious competition, these systems enable
managers to provide customer service while meeting the complex requirements
of a modern work force.

Although the specifics differ from vendor to vendor, with some offering
several functions or modules, the main tasks of labor scheduling systems
are the same. The software captures point of-sale information and creates a

sales history record for the store. It then uses this information--sales, items and customer counts--to forecast future sales. Then this information is combined with scheduling data--including union rules, state requirements for minors, vacation times, holidays and work availability--to create a personalized schedule for each store.

There are shades of differences in how each retailer measures the success of its labor scheduling system:

* At H.E.B., success is measured in terms of meeting customers' needs by putting employees where they are needed.
* At Kroger, it means taking the guesswork out of scheduling.

* At D&W, it means scheduling minors within complex child labor laws.

* At Raley's, success is measured in terms of the flexibility to mold the program to an individual store's requirements.

* At Safeway and at Felpausch, it means cutting down the time customers wait in checkout lines.

All the operators agree on one thing: The bottom line is not cost cutting, but better customer service. "We like it because we are better able to meet our customers' needs by putting employees where the demand is," says Tim Krueger, manager of productivity development at San Antonio, Texas-based H.E.B., which uses TimeCorp's MinuteMan system.

"The software enables us to put the right people in the right jobs at the right times--and we have seen a significant reduction in customer complaints," says Mike Hubert, director of management information services at Felpausch, Hastings, Mich. The company began installing Bass' Front-End Labor Scheduling system last year.
Jimmie Torres, human resources manager and former store manager at Raley's, West Sacramento, Calif., points out that the guesswork that usually comes with labor scheduling is gone. "Before, we did it in our heads. We knew it was busy from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., but we didn't know how busy. Now we can always have adequate staffing, which reduces the amount of customer waiting time and builds stronger customer confidence and loyalty."

The benefits of electronic labor scheduling go beyond customer service to actual savings, say operators. Heading the list of savings is the manager's time. Computerized scheduling can add as much as a day a week to a manager's schedule, say some users.

"Scheduling that was taking a day is now taking less than an hour to write," says Bob Cooley, a Raley's store manager. Raley's uses IMB's People Planner system. At H.E.B., Krueger says managers are saving four to six hours a week.

Retailers say there are other savings, as well. Kroger, for instance, saw an 11.53% increase in customers served per hour; a 10.44% decrease in the minutes per customer; and a savings of $20,593 per week with the software program SMILE (Store Management Information & Laborsaving Environment) by Total Control Information.
Simply installing the latest labor scheduling software doesn't ensure success, however. "The system is a conduit and a tool," says Lance Jacobs, who developed the SMILE software system. "Lots of times we'll see three or four people starting at 7 or 8 in the morning. Historical demand may justify only two people, but they may be senior people, so managers end up scheduling to employee demands rather than customer demands.

"We see a lot of favoritism--shifts created not according to workload or standard expectations," Jacobs says. "We can standardize the scheduling process through the software, but it won't be successful unless upper management backs the changes."

Mike Coles, president of TimeCorp, says his company tries to take into account several variables--called drivers--that could include customers, cases or numbers of transactions. "There could be 600 to 700 drivers," says Coles. "Some are gathered from POS, some from mainframe. We take the drivers, apply them to work standards, then the program calculates for each 15 minutes of time to make shifts for the next week."

One of the major variables for D&W Food Centers, based in Grand Rapids, Mich., is scheduling minors. Says Ron Cox, D&W's director of retail services, "Our system has allowed us to get past the labor issues and schedule much more accurately." D&W uses the Labor Resources Manager system from Uniquest.

For Safeway, the biggest labor scheduling issue is customer service--in the form of shorter lines. "The tests we ran were to check queue levels in each checkout line. The SuperSked program enabled us to move more people through the lines at a measurably faster rate," says Doug Lobsinger, a Safeway store manager who was involved in rolling out the chain's SuperSked software program from Management Robotics.

When Kroger put in the SMILE system, company executives noticed another savings--and a problem. The savings came in better use of employees. "By 11 a.m. on a typical Saturday, we would have all 12 registers open," says Steve Brackett, a Kroger store manager. "Now we run nine lanes and do the same volume."

The problem, says Brackett, was not with the software. "The toughest thing is the people. Say, for example, that you always scheduled a 7 a.m. to 3 - p.m. shift, then an 8:30 a.m. shift and a 9 a.m. shift. When you run the POS information, you find out that the demand calls for a later second and third shift. But people have been used to working those shifts for years. The software is real flexible. In fact, it's nothing compared to getting over the mind-set," says Brackett.

But the times, and mind-sets, are changing. "Initially our people just accepted the electronic scheduling," says H.E.B.'s Krueger. "Then they grew to like it because it spread the workload more evenly and it was very flexible. Now they are embracing it."

WHERE TO GET IT

Here is a listing of vendors of labor scheduling software available to supermarket operators:

* MINUTEMAN LABOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, TIMECORP SYSTEMS INC., Atlanta, Ga., (404) 552-1167. The system is used by First National and H.E.Butt.

* FRONT-END LABOR SCHEDULING, BASS INC., Dayton, Ohio, (513) 293-5732. The cost per module is $500. Used by Felpausch.

* PEOPLE PLANNER, IMB INC., Cambridge, Mass., (617) 864-1115. Used by Publix, Stop & Shop and Bruno's.

* COMPUSKED, DANA CONSULTING GROUP INC., Fort Lee, N.J., (201) 592-0234.

The cost per store starts at $1,500. Used by Red Food Stores and Gerlands.

* SMART SCHEDULER, KRONOS INC., Waltham, Mass., (617) 890-3232. The cost per store begins at $995. Used by Coborn's.

* SMILE, a joint venture of JACOB RETAIL SYSTEMS INC., Cincinnati, (513) 474-1059, and TOTAL CONTROL INFORMATION, Irvine, Calif., (800) 621-7452. The cost per store is $1,000 to $2,500. used by Big Bear and Fiesta Markets.

* SUPERSKED, MANAGEMENT ROBOTICS INC., Boulder, Colo., (303) 440-4191. The cost per store is $2,995 for DOS shelf price, not including customizing. used by Safeway and Twin County Grocers.

* LABOR RESOURCES MANAGER, UNIQUEST INC., Jacksonville, Fla., (800) 488-9773. The cost per store starts at $3,600. Used by Wegmans and Hannaford Bros.

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Keeping an Eye on Labor
Garry, Michael

ABSTRACT: As the economy forces retailers to become more conservative about
costs of all kinds, computer software that helps store managers schedule
and control their labor pool is becoming more popular. Time and attendance
systems electronically monitor and summarize employees' hours, while labor
scheduling software analyzes sales history to create a sales forecast and
labor schedule. The People Planner system from IMB Inc. gives managers
better control over employees. It allows managers to imput the complex
guidelines of a labor contract or other company rules that they would
otherwise have to commit to memory. SuperSked, a labor scheduling program
from Software Marketing Inc., reduces payroll not only by calculating total
labor hours, but by pinpointing when employees are really needed. It also
maintains an employee database and interfaces with a time and attendance
system by Kronos. Most labor scheduling systems require significant
training time for store and department managers.

TEXT: Time and attendance and labor scheduling systems--computer software
that helps store managers schedule and control their labor pool--have
become more popular in recent years for some very good reasons.

The sluggish economy, of course, has forced retailers to become more
conservative about costs of all kinds, and these systems can cut labor
costs. Add to that the booming expense of health-care benefits, which has
forced retailers to look for new ways to trim labor costs.
Supermarkets are turning to technology for answers. Jerry Morton, president
of Store Systems Consulting & Marketing, Lawrence, Kan., predicts that by
the end of this year, time and attendance systems will be installed in "at
least 10,000 stores," of which between 25% and 35% will also have labor
scheduling software.

In essence, time and attendance systems electronically monitor and
summarize employees' hours, while labor scheduling software analyzes sales
history to come up with a sales forecast and labor schedule. Both work at
the store level. Both generate reports that help managers track their
employees.

Although it would seem that labor scheduling should come first, in most cases chains and wholesalers have been investing in time and attendance first, and then labor scheduling. "You want to be careful and do it in stages," Morton says, adding that having a time and attendance system makes implementation of labor scheduling software easier. Together, the two systems automate the entire labor process, except for the production of payroll checks, which is done separately at the store, at chain or wholesaler headquarters, or by third parties.

Schwegmann Giant Super Markets, New Orleans, is equipped with time and attendance software (from BASS Inc., Dayton, Ohio), with no immediate plans to take on labor scheduling. One problem common to Schwegmann and others not doing labor scheduling: the absence of an electronic link between the front-end point-of-sale system and the PC or minicomputer that would run the labor scheduling software.

But Schwegmann is benefiting from its time and attendance system. According to Buddy Pedeaux, retail systems analyst, the system costs $11,825 per store to implement, divided among software, hardware (time clocks purchased from NCR, Dayton, Ohio) and electrical wiring. That multiplied by 16 stores in the chain gives a total cost of $189,200.

On the other hand, Pedeaux estimates an annual savings of $178,102, based on the elimination of "time theft" (long lunches, tardiness, early departure, which are identified in a report), time cards and the salaries of two key punchers and four payroll clerks. It now takes no more than a day to run the payroll, as opposed to two to three days under the old system.

The system comes with a package for printing bar-coded badges, but Pedeaux reformatted the badges in his own way. Since then, he says, BASS has made the package "more flexible."
Unlike Pedeaux, Gary Rhyne, vice president of retail systems for Scrivner, the Oklahoma City-based wholesaler, doesn't agree that a time and attendance system can save an exceptional amount of clerical labor. "You're adding employees to maintain the PCs and handle a lot of activities you wouldn't normally do," he says. Scrivner, like other wholesalers, acts as the middleman between vendors and independents, and also installs the systems and provides training and help-desk support.

But Rhyne does think his People Planner system (from IMB Inc., Cambridge, Mass.) gives managers better control over employees, especially in stores with large staffs. This control comes in the form of reports that in effect give time and attendance systems some labor scheduling capabilities. Overtime reports, for example, can tell managers how close they are to paying overtime wages. Another audit report might point out the need to cut back hours to meet a department's budget.

The IMB time and attendance software, like other systems, allows managers to input the complex guidelines of a labor contract or other company rules that they would otherwise have to commit to memory. And it maintains a database of employee information such as date of last salary increase. (List price: $1,500 per module for DOS systems; $2,000 each for UNIX.)
Morton warns that stores that install automated time and attendance systems must be willing to train employees on the new aspects of checking in and out. Some time clocks, for example, allow employees to key in a job assignment number when moving from department to department; this helps in budgeting for each department. And some clocks are programmed not to pay overtime to employees who punch in more than six minutes before starting

time or six minutes after quitting time.

Though not as prevalent as time and attendance systems, labor scheduling
software has been catching on lately. "When times are tight, there's always
an interest in this," says a spokesman for a co-op. "I installed two
today."

The co-op's labor scheduling program, called SuperSked (from Software
Marketing Inc., West Orange, N.J.), has borne fruit. In one six-month test
of front-end and courtesy booth employees, it improved a store's sales per
man-hour from $330 to $387. In another nine-week test at the front end,
front-end payroll, as a percentage of total store payroll, decreased by
almost a percentage point; this savings alone paid for the software, priced
at $1,995 for single units. Normally, the payback period is between three
and 11 months, depending on how efficient the store's labor scheduling had
been.
According to the spokesman, the SuperSked software reduces payroll not only
by calculating total labor hours, but by pinpointing when employees are
really needed. It might suggest that, based on projected sales, a checker
only needs to come in at 9:30 a.m. on Monday instead of the standard 9 a.m.
"When you make up the schedule manually, the tendency is to repeat the
previous week's schedule," he says. "But if you've scheduled people at the
front end who aren't really needed, they're usually not spending the time
packing out or doing something productive."

The software also factors in employee productivity, availability, seniority
and wage level, and tracks who should be allowed to work the express lanes
or the courtesy booth. It takes into account that one checker will be
assisted by a bagger, while another will not. In addition, it maintains an
employee database and interfaces with a time and attendance system made by
Kronos, Waltham, Mass.

Dominick's Finer Foods, Northlake, Ill., which has used the Infotronx labor
scheduling software in a few stores for about six months, is in the process
of rolling it out to all 100 stores in the chain. The software is based on
a sophisticated "stochastic" probability modeling technique used by NASA.
Dominick's was the first user of the Infotronx time and attendance system,
having had it installed for seven years.
Gary Esch, vice president of methods and productivity for Dominick's,
prefers not to comment on any labor savings the software may have produced.
But he says it has resulted in improved customer service, reflected in
shorter lines at the front end. "We're seeing a better match of front-end
labor to customer traffic patterns," says Esch.

The Infotronx software makes sales forecasts using the previous seven
years' daily sales data, by department, and the previous four weeks'
customer traffic data, including the number of items and customers and the
size of each order, by the quarter hour. From the sales forecast, it
devises the current week's labor schedule.

The sales data reflects the impact of holidays and paydays, while the
traffic patterns show changes that take place in the near term--from the
closing of a competing store, for example. Esch calls the forecasts "very
reasonable." The software also generates update reports that tell managers
how they're doing compared to the forecasts.

"We tried to do this before manually, but we wouldn't make as many changes
as frequently as we do now," says Esch. "Before we updated schedules every
four to eight weeks; now it's every week."
Carr Gottstein Foods, Anchorage, Alaska, will be rolling out labor

scheduling software from CompuSked, Fort Lee, N.J., to all of its 13 stores later this year after installing new store controllers. In a pilot test started last year, the software increased the productivity of the assistant manager responsible for labor scheduling.

In addition, the software "showed us a little fat that we hadn't trimmed from our schedule," says Jim Dunlap, retail systems manager. Actually, CompuSked's schedules were too lean. "We want to focus more on service--have a bagger with every checker," says Dunlap. "So we've come up with schedules that are between theirs and our old schedule."

The CompuSked program, which runs on an NCR Tower computer, projects sales for a one-week period based on the previous year's sales data. Its cost starts at $1,000, and goes up depending on the store's computer configuration, says CompuSked. At Carr Gottstein, the program has been altered to incorporate another software program, which determines how long various grocery tasks take to do.

Labor scheduling vendors are usually willing to correct glitches in the program that crop up. Following a change from PCs to minicomputers, for example Dunlap found that after a screen was cleared, portions of it would remain; but CompuSked corrected the problem, he says.

Most labor scheduling systems require significant training time for store an department managers. "The biggest problem has been the training time resulting from typical supermarket turnover, says the co-op spokesman. "Running the system is not like being a checked you need to be somewhat PC literate it helps to have typing skills." Adds Dominick's Esch, "We want managers to understand why it schedules the way it does."

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File 16

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S PEOPLE (N) PLANNER (N) SYSTEM
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DIALOG(R)File   16:Gale Group PROMT(R)
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04089667   Supplier Number: 45959186   (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)
 **The Sports Authority Announces Major Initiative to Increase Customer
 Service and Improve Inventory Productivity; Retailer Rolls Out
 People-Planner Labor Management System to Schedule Employees to Customer
 Traffic.**
Business Wire, p11271061
Nov 27, 1995
Language: English   Record Type: Fulltext
Document Type: Newswire; Trade
Word Count: 712
TEXT:
FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 27, 1995--The Sports Authority
(NYSE:TSA), the nation's largest full-line sporting goods retailer, adopts
a high technology solution to the age-old challenge of providing excellent
customer service.
     As part of its "TSA 2000" initiative, the 130-store chain has begun a
chainwide roll-out of the People-Planner=AE labor management= software,
developed by Information Marketing Businesses, Inc. (IMB), to forecast
customer shopping patterns and then schedule the appropriate staff
throughout the store.
     Based on results from the pilot program, The Sports Authority expects
that People-Planner will enhance service levels by matching staffing to
traffic flow and item movement. Under-and over-staffing situations will be
reduced by precise allocation of the right number and skill of personnel to
the sales floor, cash registers, receiving area and back office at all
times. During the pilot test period, People-Planner streamlined the
scheduling process by matching employees' skill levels (i.e. cashier,
fishing expert) with customer traffic and/or item movement, allowing store
managers to spend more time on the sales floor. In addition, store managers
credited the software with helping them to make more effective hiring
decisions through a better match of store needs and a prospective
associates's skills and availability.
     "We feel our customer service differentiates us from our competitors,"
stated Jack Smith, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and President. "And
this software should only enhance our position. With People-Planner, we can
better project how many customers will be in the store and how many items
will be sold during each period the store is open, department by
department, to ensure we have the best coverage on hand."
     "We reviewed several labor management packages but felt that IMB's
program had the flexibility to keep up with our stores," says Arnie Sedel,
Senior Vice President of Operations. "People-Planner is not just a front
end labor system; it forecasts for the whole store, down to the customer
and item level. Our footwear department, for example, requires more time
per customer than does the team sports department. During our test period,
People-Planner forecasted the number of customers per department so we
could put our resources where they were needed."
     The pilot program began with one store in November 1994 and was
expanded to eight stores during the subsequent eight months. The Sports
Authority has now installed the program in an additional 60 stores and
anticipates that the remaining stores will be rolled out in spring of 1996.
     "The Sports Authority is committed to installing People-Planner in all
of their major markets in time for the important holiday selling season,"
says Barbara Rodes, account manager for IMB. "They have put together a
dedicated team of regional trainers to go out to the stores and train the

managers. In less than one month, approximately half of The Sports
Authority stores began using an automated labor management system. From the
beginning, this effort has been supported by a strong commitment and much
enthusiasm from senior management through to the store level."

The Sports Authority is running the People Planner Dynamic Scheduler
and Forecaster modules on personal computers at the store level. Point of
sale information is downloaded to the People-Planner program, which then
forecasts sales, items and customers by department in 30-minute increments
for each day. The system then produces an optimal schedule based on
forecasted labor needs and employee skills and availability. Store managers
can make adjustments to the schedule as necessary. The system replaces the
previous process of scheduling employees manually, which took eight to ten
hours per week, per store.

The People-Planner system is developed by Information Marketing
Businesses, a privately-held company located in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Since 1982, the company has developed labor management systems exclusively
for the retail industry. Its products include People-Planner Forecaster,
Dynamic Scheduler and Time & Attendance modules, all of which run on a
myriad of hardware platforms. There are over 14,000 retail sites worldwide
running People-Planner products, including Army Airforce Exchange Services
(AAFES), Burlington Coat Factory, Kmart, Publix, Shaw's Supermarkets,
Target, TJ Maxx and Woolworths Australia.

The Sports Authority operates 130 megastores in 26 states across the
United States and Canada. The company has opened 23 stores in 1995 and
expects to open 6 additional stores prior to the holiday selling season.

        CONTACT: Alex Stanton
                  Director of Investor Relations
                  305-677-6003
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03452368   Supplier Number: 44815592 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)
Raley's Finds Resistance To Automated Schedules
Supermarket News, p11
July 4, 1994
ISSN: 0039-5803
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TEXT:
By CHRIS O'LEARY
    WASHINGTON - No matter how good the program, technology is only half
the battle in implementing automated labor scheduling.
    The other half is convincing and training store managers to use the
automated system, a task that can be immensely challenging and

time-consuming, said Robert Lyon, store systems coordinator at Raley's West
Sacramento, Calif.

'Store managers want to control everything in their environment. For
many of them, instead of relinquishing something as personal as scheduling
to a computer program, they would rather spend the time doing it
themselves,' Lyon said at the Retail Systems '94 conference here last
month.

Raley's introduction of a labor scheduling software system last year,
he said, ran into a serious obstacle at the store manager level.

The system, People Planner, from Information Marketing Business,
Cambridge, Mass., uses point-of-sale scan data and customer counts to
create a weekly work schedule. Raley's launched it last August with a
four-month training blitzkrieg for managers at 64 system.

After the training, Raley's conducted a survey indicating 60% of the
managers felt scheduling had improved as a result of using the new system.

'But then I began hearing rumors' managers were not using the system,
Lyon said. 'I started calling around trying to find more evidence of this,
and as near as we could tell, probably 25% of the managers were not using
the programs for one reason or another.'

Because store managers were required to send computer-generated
schedules to the executive offices every week, many of them were continuing
to make the schedule manually and keying it into the computer, he said.

'That concerned us, not only that people weren't using it, but that it
was very difficult to identify' which managers weren't using the system,
Lyon said.

As a result, Raley's had store managers undergo another round of
training this April. The training sessions helped some managers increase
their knowledge of the program. More importantly, it enabled the chain to
pinpoint which managers were not using it.

'We had a trainer come in and spend a day working with them,' Lyon
said. 'He was able to find out pretty quickly whether (the managers) were
using the schedule and whether or not the personnel records were up to
date.'

Lyon said about 10% of store managers are still 'struggling' with the
system. But he is optimistic they will eventually accept the concept that a
computerized program can create a more efficient schedule.

'I asked one manager why he didn't use the program, and he said he had
a particular vision of what his schedule should look like, and that's not
what he got from using it - so the program was wrong,' Lyon said. 'It's
difficult to (tell) someone like that, 'Maybe your original concept was
incorrect, maybe you weren't meeting your needs the way you thought you
were.' '

After considering the obstacles Raley's has encountered in
implementing the system, Lyon feels the introduction could have been
handled better.

'I've been told you need a commitment from the main office before you
roll out a program, but I think it's best if you start from the store
level,' Lyon said. In particular, the survey should have been conducted at
the beginning of the process.

'It would have been easier to identify who the tough nuts to crack are
out there. I think we would have gotten a much more candid response at that
point than after the company has already rolled out a million-dollar
program. (Managers) are shy about standing up in front of their bosses and
saying, 'You guys messed up.'

'The person has to operate this program and believe in this program,'
Lyon said. 'We liken accepting automated labor scheduling to jumping out of
an airplane and having faith your parachute will open. Some of those people
we were able to convince the chute would open. Others I think we're
probably still struggling to convince.'

When it implemented the system, Raley's had hoped to reduce labor

costs while maintaining an adequate staff to serve customers, Lyon said.

'Our service levels had been dropping, and we were getting a little more concerned about labor costs and bottom line. One of the mandates we had initially was to reduce labor percentages while increasing sales. We were trying to give them a tool that would help them increase their service level without increasing labor.'

The program was also designed to help relieve some duties of the store managers. Using Raley's previous system, a spreadsheet program that recorded hourly sales for two days during two consecutive weeks, some managers would spend almost two days working on weekly front-end schedules, Lyon said.

'The manager had to sit down and forecast what he was going to do in sales for each day of the week, and then the system would tell him how many people he would need for each hour. That's not as effective as we'd like a manager to be. If he's spending two days writing a schedule, who's running the store?'

The new system uses the number of items rung up by cashiers and hourly customer counts as the means of measuring how many workers are needed at a certain time, Lyon said.

'Sales in themselves do not create work,' Lyon said 'The number of items a cashier has to check out and the number of customers a cashier has to deal with are the things that create work, not sales.'

Lyon said Roll's has had increased sales since the program was started, though he cautioned that the increase may be partly from an upswing in the California economy. 'It's hard to say whether that increase has come from better customer service or a better economic climate,' he said.

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